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SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: GOVERNMENT OUTLINES EFFORTS TO COMBAT
TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

REF: A. COLOMBO 1188
[1](#)B. STATE 113842
[1](#)C. COLOMBO 1031
[1](#)D. COLOMBO 943
[1](#)E. STATE 71163

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary. DCM and Poloff recently met with GSL officials from the Foreign Employment Bureau, the National Child Protection Authority, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Development, and the Sri Lanka Police to present the Department's TIP Action Plan and follow up on an August 23 meeting with the Foreign Secretary on this issue. Our GSL interlocutors outlined steps they have already taken to address TIP and additional measures that are underway. Officials throughout the GSL have a clear understanding of the TIP problem and are eager to work with the U.S. to make improvements. End Summary.

FEB Closely Monitors Migrant Labor

[1](#)2. (U) DCM and Poloff met with Chairman of the Foreign Employment Bureau (FEB) Kingsley Ranawaka on August 29. Ranawaka noted FEB's efforts to ensure that migrant workers are placed in legitimate positions. He said the FEB must approve the employment contracts of all Sri Lankans traveling abroad on a work visa. In an effort to make recruitment agents more accountable for their placements, he has recently changed FEB regulations to require that the agent appear before an FEB officer with the worker and sign the employment contract. He noted that disreputable foreign agents, once identified by Embassy officials, are placed on a "blacklist" so that contracts involving those agents will no longer be approved. The Workers Welfare Fund, he added, pays to send 10 to 15 abused workers per month back to Sri Lanka. These workers are met at the airport by FEB officers and provided financial assistance. Ranawaka said he is working to establish new guidelines that would ensure medical care for returnees and a system to monitor their rehabilitation.

Raising Awareness of Child Trafficking and Prostitution

13. (U) On September 4, Poloff met with Chairman of the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) Jagath Wellawatta. He emphasized the NCPA's efforts to raise awareness of child trafficking for sex tourism along the coastal belt of Sri Lanka. The NCPA is conducting awareness programs in Anuradhapura and Kandy this year. In addition, NCPA plans to visit 23 vocational training centers set up by the Foreign Employment Bureau to speak to young women about the risks of trafficking associated with foreign employment. The NCPA is working to make sure victim assistance services are available to children, including special hospital wards for child prostitution victims and seven "certified schools" which provide shelter and rehabilitation for children who are rescued from prostitution. The NCPA has its own police unit, which investigates cases of child trafficking and prostitution.

A New GSL TIP Focal Point

14. (U) On September 9, Poloff met again with Secretary of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Development Indrani Sugathadasa, whom the Foreign Secretary recently designated as the GSL focal point on TIP issues. Sugathadasa encouraged the Embassy to raise the issue of human trafficking with the Inspector General of Police. She noted that the police have the largest role to play in ensuring that offenders are held accountable. She agreed with the

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Foreign Secretary's earlier suggestion (ref A) that a GSL TIP working group would improve interagency coordination, and undertook to follow up on the idea in October. She also offered to organize a GSL-hosted roundtable event, including NGOs and the diplomatic community, to raise awareness on TIP.

She highlighted for Poloff the efforts of the Worker's Welfare Fund and Sri Lankan embassies abroad in providing assistance to migrant workers who find themselves in difficult situations. Once they return, she added, migrant workers can make use of shelters that offer rehabilitation services for abused women, including psychiatric care. She noted that one shelter opened in Kalutara in June and another will open soon near Colombo.

Police Eager to Tackle TIP

15. (U) On September 17, DCM, ARSO, and Poloff met Inspector General of Police Victor Perera and senior police officials who have direct oversight of anti-trafficking functions. The police noted that training on TIP has been expanded significantly, including increased in-service training, district level anti-trafficking training through the Women's and Children's Bureau, and a NCPA training program. An anti-trafficking program has also been incorporated into the basic training program for police officers. The officials said a pending bill on witness protection and victim assistance, once passed, will make it much easier for them to investigate trafficking cases and improve Sri Lanka's conviction rate. They expect the new legislation to embolden more victims to testify against their abusers. The police highlighted a number of recently launched investigations of recruitment agents and sub-agents involved in trafficking cases.

16. (SBU) COMMENT: Officials throughout the GSL seem to have a clear understanding of the TIP problem in Sri Lanka, and of what needs to be done to address it. They have taken steps over the past few years to make legal and procedural changes that will improve the country's TIP record. The officials we met seemed eager to work with the U.S. to make further improvements. The police, in particular, impressed

us as being highly motivated to fight trafficking. Our assistance will help address resource and capacity constraints within the GSL to ensure continued progress. Emboffs have discussed with GSL officials the development of benchmarks with which to measure progress in fighting trafficking (ref A). We will forward these proposed benchmarks in the near future to G/TIP for review.

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